AN INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Intemperance as a cause of disease
SUBMITTED TO THE
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Gentlemen

In selecting the subject of intemperance as a cause of disease I do not mean to infer that I am guilty myself and want to speak of other faults. I select it because I know something of its bad effect on the human system and see every day demonstration of the fact, that I shall endeavor to detail.

A modern author has observed that temperance and exercise are the two best physicians in the world. He might have truly added that if these were duly regarded there would be but little business for any others. But they
are not. Hence the great number of Practitioners required to make up old remainders of Constitutions which have been torn down by the various forms of Intemperance as it exists among the human family. If we were to judge from mans actions it would appear that he thought his stay in this world too long and solicited the approach of death by trampling the laws of nature as it were under his feet. The danger of Intemperance is explained in the very construction of the human body. Health depends on that state of the solids and fluids which fits them for the proper performance of the vital fine
tions. While these go regularly on the individual is free from disease but whatever disturbs this necessarily impairs health. Intemperance never fails to derange the whole animal organism. It disturbs digestion, relaxes the nervous system, upsets the different seerions irregular, irritates the fluids, and in these ways occasions numerous diseases which are often incurable. The analogy between the nourishment of animals and vegetables affords a striking example of the effects of Intemperance. Moisture emanates greatly promote vegetation yet an over supply of either will destroy this proc. So it is with
the human subject. A reasonable quantity of aliment is requisite to the preservation of life and health, but an excess often brings on disease and death. Hence we see that the highest degree of human wisdom consists in regulating our appetites and passions so as to avoid all excess. It is this that entitles us to the character of rational beings. The slave of appetite will ever be a disgrace to human nature. The Author of nature has endowed us with passions for the propagation of our species, the preservation of the individual, etc. An excessive indulgence in these is a form of intemperance which begets malignant
diseases: such as syphilis, gonorrhea, spermatorrhea, etc. Man not content with the
satisfying the simple calls of nature, create artificial wants and are continually
in search of something to satisfy them. But imaginary wants can never be gratified.
Nature is content with little, but luxury knows no bounds.
Hence the epicure, the debauchee. Seldom stop in their
Career until their money or constitution fails then indeed.
Seldom till then they see the
evils of their course. But alas! it is too late to call back their
former fortune or that noble constitution the value of which
in its normal condition can not be estimated. It is impossible to lay down any fixed rules with regard to diet, but every rational being knows what is meant by exception and it is in the power of every one to avoid all extremes. The best rule however is to study simplicity. Nature delights in the most plain and simple food and every animal except man follows her dictates. Man alone ransacks the whole creation in quest of luxuries to satiate his fictitious appetites which is always at expense of his own well-being. When we see a fashionable table spread out in all its magnifi-
once we imagine that we see
sore-throats, dyspepsies, fevers, & lethargies with innumerable other
diseases lying in ambush among the dishes, bottles & glasses seeking whom they may
devour. For intemperance is more destructive in other things
than in diet. How quick does the immoderate pursuit of
Carnal pleasure, or the abusive use of intoxicating liquors
ruin the best constitution! Indeed these two immoralities
ought to perish! Hence so often we see the rotaries of Bacchus,
whose very essences, even before they have
arrived at the prime of life, come out with disease, and hastening
with a swift pace to a
premature and untimely grave. Did man reflect on the painful disease and premature deaths which are constantly occurring as a consequence of intemperance, it would, I think, be sufficient to make him shrink back with horror from the indulgence even in his dainty pleasures. But intemperance does not stop here. It would be to God that its victims were the only ones to suffer. Look at the numberless orphans possessed of the streets in idleness, clad in dirt and rags, whose parents regardless of the future spent in it at debauch what might have
served to raise a healthy and respectable offspring. Families are not only reduced to poverty and disgrace, but even interdicted by intemperance. Nothing tends so much to parents' propagation and to shorten the lives of children as the intemperance of parents. The poor man who labours all day for a livelihood, and at night lies down content with his humble fare can boast as numerous and healthy offspring. While the rich man sinks in ease or luxury often languishes without aid to his ample fortunes: and if he has one it is an object of pity, already having
fatal diseases pressing on its vitals, and in a short time it rises away and is consigned over to an early grave, as the fruits of an intemperate ancestry. Intemperance is not confined to families alone, but even states and peoples feel the influence of it and rise or fall as it prevails.

Instead of mentioning in detail the different kinds of intemperance and pointing out their markable influences on health & shall only by way of example in the remainder of my discourse make a few remarks on a particular form of this great vice: Intemperance, viz the abuse of intoxicating beverages?
-ing liquors. Over this is what everyone has seen and many experienced something of, and every individual who may chance to read my thesis can testify to the truth of my unqualified assertions. I must say and sorry I am that if can be said that we the medical students of the University of Nashville are some of us guilty of this form of intemperance. How strange it is that we would this act considering that we profess to understand something of the human economy what it requires to prompt it to the performance of its various functions and how every will do
range every function in the body. Many drinks day and night and in fact every time they can get anything to drink while there are others who are more moderate and only take a little before eating (as they say) for the purpose of aiding digestion. Now with a moment's reflection we can see the inconsistency of their argument. When we have a specimen from the animal or the vegetable kingdom the forms first exist of which we want to retain the first thing thought of, alcohol. Animal is animal, vegetable is vegetable, and alcohol is alcohol wherever found. So then it follows that if alco-
Hol will preserve a substance when in contact with a gloop of water, is it not reasonable that the same alcohol when in like contact with the same substance within a lethargy bag or the human stomach have the same power of preservation. If this be true it is easily seen that so far from aiding digestion it rather prevents the digestive organs from performing their own function. Moderate dram drinking leads to intoxication and every act of intoxication is nature to the expense of a fever to throw off the poisonous draught. When this is repeated
almost every day it is easy to foresee the evil consequences. That constitution must necessarily be very strong to hold out under the influence of a daily fever. But fevers occasionally, by drinking, seldom go off in a day but often end in inflammation of the stomach, liver, or brain and produce fatal effects. Though the drunkards should not often fall by acute disease he seldom escapes those of a chronic form. Liqueurs, when used freely, work on the bowels and interfere with digestion they destroy the powers of the nervous system, generally and produce par-
They also heat and cleanse the blood, destroy its balsamic quality, render it unfit for circulation and the nourishment of the body. Hence enlarged livers with a bad portal circulation causing obstructions and dyspepsia as a consequence. These are some of the many ways in which copes make their exit. The habit of drinking often proceeds from misfortunes in life, some lose their property, some their friends, and others are disappointed in love, and resort to drinking as their only refuge. It affords temporary relief but this solace is of short life and when it is over the spirits...
sink as far below their usual tone as they have been raised above it. Now a partition of the door becomes necessary and so on, every fresh door creating the necessity of another and larger till at length the unhappy were-ch falls a victim to this poison drug, which not only proves destructive to the general health of an individual but also to the faculties of the mind. When the brain is highly stimulated if we suddenly withdraw the stimulant, very bad consequences follow: it is this which always causes delirium tremens. It is strange
that men valuing themselves on account of a su-
perior degree of reason to that of inferior animals
should fall so far below them in the thing most re-
quisite to both health and repro-
duction: viz. moderation in
eating, drinking, sleeping, ex-
ercise, &c.

This much I have thought
necessary to say in regard to
intemperance as a cause
of disease. I shall now con-
dign my production over
to older, wiser, & better
heads, and shall wait in
anxious suspense, the just
sentence either come thou
steps or depart ye cursed